

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 03361 150658Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CPR-01 PER-01 SSC-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /047 W
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R 141210Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5334

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS : PFOR TC US
SUBJECT : PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

1. ON DECEMBER 14 AT 11:00 AM, I PRESENTED MY CREDENTIALS AS AMBASSADOR TO THE UAE AND LETTERS OF RECALL OF MY PREDECESSOR, AMBASSADOR STERNER, TO HIS HIGHNESS, SHAIKH ZAYID BIN SULTAN AL-NAHAYAN, PRESIDENT OF THE UAE AT BATHIN PALACE IN ABU DHABI. DELAY IN PRESENTING CREDENTIALS OCCASIONED BY SEVERAL FACTORS INCLUDING ZAYID'S VISITS LAST MONTH TO CAIRO AND MUSCAT, INTENSIVE ROUND OF MEETINGS WITH OTHER RULERS ON FURTHER INTEGRATION OF EMIRATES PRIOR TO ZAYID'S RE-ELECTION AS PRESIDENT FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEARS, AND IMPACT OF EID AND CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL DAY HOLIDAYS THIS YEAR ON DECEMBER 12 AND 13. I WAS PRECEDED BY NEW AMBASSADOR FROM BANGLADESH, WHO HAD BEEN WAITING FOR OVER TWO MONTHS, AND FOLLOWED BY NEW EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO HAS BEEN WAITING FOR OVER FIVE WEEKS.

2. I READ FORMAL REMARKS WHICH I HAD PREPARED IN ARABIC, HAVING EARLIER PROVIDED PROTOCOL WITH AN ADVANCE COPY. AFTER REPLYING WITH A BRIEF EXTEMPORANEOUS STATEMENT ABOUT EXCELLENCE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND UAE, SHAIKH ZAYID ASKED ME TO SIT DOWN FOR AN INFORMAL CHAT WHICH LASTED ABOUT 20 MINUTES. FONMIN SUWAIDI AND COURT CHAMBERLAIN (AND DIRECTOR OF ABU DHABI WATER AND ELECTRICITY BOARD) SHAIKH SUROOR WERE PRESENT, AS WERE MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED ME. ZAYID, POSSIBLY FOREWARNED THAT I HAD EARLIER HAD DIFFICULTY IN CATCHING ON TO HIS UNUSUAL BEDUIN DIALECT, VERY KINDLY USED HIS BEST SEMI-CLASSICAL ARABIC AND SPOKE SLOWLY AND DELIBERATELY. THIS AVOIDED NEED OF HAVING

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ANY INTERPRETER.

3. AFTER WISHING ME WELL ON MY NEW ASSIGNMENT, ZAYID DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH HIS CONCERN THAT US NOT LOSE INTEREST IN MIDDLE EAST. THE ARAB WORLD HAD A LONG TRADITION OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH US AND HAD ADMIRER WHAT PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE IN LAST FEW YEARS IN WORKING TOWARD AN EQUITABLE SETTLEMENT. THE US STILL HAD THE KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN REACHING A SETTLEMENT. THE UAE, AND REST OF ARAB WORLD GENERALLY, WANTED TO COOPERATE WITH US SO THAT ANY FURTHER STEPS THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED AS RESULT OF US INITIATIVES WOULD BE WARMLY RECIPROCATED BY ARABS. BUT WORLD DID NOT STAND STILL AND INTERESTS OF US AND ARAB WORLD WHICH MUTUALLY REINFORCE CLOSE RELATIONS COULD ONLY SUFFER IF NOTHING NEW HAPPENED.

4. I TOLD ZAYID THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHAT POLICIES NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD FOLLOW IN MIDDLE EAST BUT I COULD NOT CONCEIVE THAT IT WOULD IGNORE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERTAKING NEW INITIATIVE. I COULD NOT SPECULATE ON WHAT FORM IT MIGHT TAKE BUT I FELT THERE WAS A GENERAL AWARENESS WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC THAT FURTHER PROCRASTINATION WOULD HURT US INTERESTS. I ALSO SAID THAT I BELIEVED AMERICAN PUBLIC WAS MUCH MORE AWARE OF ATTITUDES OF ARAB WORLD NOW THAN BEFORE WITH ME ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN ARAB WORLD WIDELY REPORTED IN US MEDIA. ZAYID'S RESPONSE WAS THAT HE BELIEVED THAT TIMING FOR ANOTNCR INITIATIVE BY US WAS NEVER BETTER THAN NOW. SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST FOR MOMENT WAS AGAIN RELATIVELY QUIET AND THERE WAS "GREAT ANTICIPATION" THAT US WILL DO SOMETHING. ARABS WANTED TO COOPERATE WITH US IN REACHING A SETTLEMENT BUT FAVORABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTITUDE COULD DETERIORATE RAPIDLY IF HOPE IS LOST THAT US WILL ACT QUICKLY AND DISILLUSIONMENT SETS IN.

5. I ALSO USED OCCASION TO EXPRESS AGAIN US GOVERNMENT'S PLEASURE THAT ZAYID HAD AGREED TO CONTINUE AT HELM OF UAE FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEARS AND THAT MY PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS CAME AT A TIME WHEN UAE HAS JUST COMPLETED CELEBRATING ITS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY AS A FEDERATION WHICH I GUESS WOULD BE A HAPPY AUGURY FOR MY MISSION. ZAYID RESPONDED WARMLY STATING THAT HE WOULD ALWAYS BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AVAILABLE "DAY OR NIGHT" IF I WANTED TO SEE HIM.

6. TEXT OF FORMAL REMARKS IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC BEING SENT UNDER COVER OF AIRGRAM.
DICKMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Draft Date: 14 DEC 1976
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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